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Creation Of The Animal People

Okanogan

Traditional

The earth was once a human being: Old One made her out of a woman. "You will be the mother of all people," he said.

Earth is alive yet, but she has been changed. The soil is her flesh, the rocks are her bones, the wind is her breathe, trees and grass are her hair. She lives spread out, and we live on her. When she moves, we have an earthquake.

After taking the woman and changing her to earth, Old One gathered some of her flesh and rolled it into balls, as people do with mud or clay. He made the first group of these balls into the ancients, the early world.

The ancients were people, yet also animals. In form some looked human while some walked on all fours like animals. Some could fly like birds; others could swim like fishes. All had the gift of speech, as well as greater powers and cunning than either animals or people. But deer were never among the ancients, they were always animals, even as they are today.

Besides the ancients, real people and real animals lived on the earth at that time. Old One made the people out of the last balls of mud he took from the Earth. He rolled them over and over, shaped them like Indians, and blew on them to bring them alive. They were so ignorant they were the most helpless of all the creatures Old One had made.

Old One made people and animals into males and females so they might breed and multiply. Thus all living things came from the earth. When we look around, we see part of our mother everywhere.

The difficulty with the early world was that most of the ancients were selfish and some were monsters, and there was much trouble among them. They were also very stupid in some ways. Though they knew they had to hunt in order to live, they did not know which creatures were deer and which were people, and sometimes they ate people by mistake.

At last Old One said, "There will soon be no people if I let things go on like this." So he sent Coyote to kill the monsters and other evil beings among the ancients and teach the Indians how to do things.

And Coyote began to travel on the earth , teaching the Indians, making life easier and better for them, and performing many wonderful deeds.

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